

Neille V. McLaughlin
Second Ave.
Mariinton, W. Va.

POC. HONTAS COUNTY

-1-

CHAPTER 4 - Sec. 4 - part a - Aug. 5

THE HILLSBORO COMMUNITY.

The town of Hillsboro is located in a rich and beautiful valley. It is two and one-half miles from the nearest railroad station called Seebert, and named in honor of a family by that name that settled here in the wilderness in the early days. Hillsboro was named for Richard Hill, the pioneer from North Carolina, who built his home on a good farm in the neighborhood of Lobelia. His house was an unusually good one for that age. It was built of hewed logs, and the space between the logs was filled with mortar or mud and then whitewashed. It had three porches, two tall chimneys, and eight rooms. Hills Creek was named for Mr. Hill and because of his sterling worth, will sing of his glory as long as its waters flow. The creek flows through a narrow channel which increases its velocity until it plunges over a precipice sixty or more feet and creating the falls of Hills Creek.

Bruffey's Creek named after the first settler, John Bruffey, son of Patrick Bruffey, the pioneer, a revolutionary soldier under General Wayne, unites in time to flood with Hills Creek where their waters sink under Droop Mountain to appear again in the lower end of the Little Levels. Hills Creek forms Locust Creek and empties into the Greenbrier River. Many of the numerous progeny of Richard Hill founded their homes in the Hillsboro Community.

-2-

The majority of the people of the Hillsboro Community are of the Scotch-Irish descent, their chief pursuits being agriculture and stock raising. Many fine herds of cattle and sheep, from time immemorial, have been prepared for the eastern markets and at the present time the farmers are becoming aroused to the importance of pure bred stock.

Hillsboro has always been a religious and educational center. In extracts from the journal of Rev. Francis Asbury we find that in the years 1788, 1790 and 1796, he made three evangelistic tours through this section of the country coming up through Greenbrier County each time and being entertained and preaching at the home of McNeel in the Little Levels, going from there to the Drinnom home in the Edray neighborhood. His course led from there to Cloverlick down through Tygarts Valley in Randolph County enroute to Morgantown. At the McNeel home lively religious discussions were indulged in by the whole community.

Oak Grove Presbyterian Church was organized in the year 1793. The early records of the church were lost and no one remembers when it was built. A substantial brick structure was later built southeast of Hillsboro, where the cemetery is still kept up. The most distinguished ministers who served this church from 1820 to 1872 were Rev. Joseph Brown, Rev. Wm. G. Campbell, Rev. John S. Blain, Rev. Mitchell D. Dunlap, and Rev. D. S. Sydenstricker.

The new church, a frame building, was built in the town of Hillsboro, where the present church is now located, in the early ministry of Dr. D. S. Sydenstricker. He was

succeeded by Rev. J. C. Johnson. The frame church was torn down in 1910 and a new church was built. A new brick church now occupies the site and bears the name "Oak Grove Church" in memory of the pioneer church although surrounded by a maple grove.

In the early part of the eighteenth century a very important educational work flourished in what was then the village of Hillsboro. Under the supervision of Rev. Jos. Brown the brick Academy was built and contained one large central room and two wings. The name of Hillsboro was abandoned in deference to that of "Academy", so strong was the school's influence on the minds and hearts of the people. In recent years the old name Hillsboro has been restored to the town.

M. A. Dunlap of Poca City, Oklahoma, remembering conversations heard in the home of his uncle Rev. M. D. Dunlap, thinks the first teacher ever in the Hillsboro Community was a man by the name of Keenan, who taught more than a hundred years ago. This teacher was considered a very learned man from the fact that he could read and write, and had figured in the arithmetic as far as the rule of three. The next teacher was the Rev. John S. Blain, a Presbyterian preacher, a teacher, and a physician. Next came Rev. Joseph Brown whose gentle Christian spirit greatly endeared him to the people. It is thought that as he was instrumental in building the new brick building that he was the first teacher within its walls. Rev. M. D. Dunlap succeeded him and taught from 1835 to 1845. His school had a wide reputation among

his pupils and enjoyed the patronage of the Lewises and Irwins of Kanawha County. There were also pupils from Fayette, Greenbrier, Monroe, Bath, and Highland Counties. He taught throughout the entire year and sought the aid of the more advanced pupils, notably, Rev. Wm. T. Price and Rev. James Haines.

Mr. Kelso of Pennsylvania, and Miss Priscilla Ramsey of Augusta County, Virginia, taught one session, and after the close of school were married, and went to western Pennsylvania to conduct a boarding school. Rev. Daniel A. Penick filled the position of teacher one year, boarded at Colonel Paul McNeel's, and the following autumn married the latter's eldest daughter. Rev. Emerson taught two sessions, boarded at Colonel McNeel's and made a compass that ran a perfect line from the McNeel gate to the Academy. Miss May Sprinkle taught in the home of Colonel McNeel the first year of the Civil War and was betrothed to John Burgess the first man from this community to be killed by the Northern soldiers in their initial raid through this country.

From the foregoing, it is easy to understand why so many notable people came from this fine institution of learning. The lives of Mr. Harmanius Stulting and family deserve special mention. They were natives of Holland, and to escape religious persecution, came to this country when it was in its infancy. They were valuable additions to the social life of the community and through their piety accomplished much good in this land of their adoption. Mr. Cornelius

Stulting, eldest son in the family, was a fine teacher for many years, and died not so many years ago. Mrs. Carrie Stulting Sydenstricker, a daughter of the family, gave her life as a missionary in China, being sent as a member of the Oak Grove Church. She was the wife of the missionary, Andrew Sydenstricker and the mother of the famous novelist, Pearl Buck.

The first permanent settler in the Hillsboro community was John McNeel of Frederick County, Virginia. He came here in the year 1765.

John McNeel built the White Pole Church on the hill set apart for the McNeel cemetery, the first church in the community.

In the northern section of the Hillsboro community we have Mill Point, a small industrial village, including within its limits proper a store, a blacksmith shop, two flour mills, and three homes. Just above the village is a wonderful spring. The spring gushes forth so abundantly that it forms a miniture cataract. The water is so pure and cold that it is called the Blue Spring. There is a tradition that herds of buffalo formerly gathered in the valley facing the spring and drank from this water, and that it was from the stamping of the buffalo that "Stamping Creek" derived its name. Two of the tribes of Indians that frequented this region were the Ottawas and the Shawnees. Pontiac and Cornstalk were among their leaders. The death of the Bridger boys is the most dramatic story of Indian cruelty we know or in connection with the Mill Point fort.

The people who live in the Hillshore community are:
The Boulders, Branks, Cistera, Hoffmann, Claudette, Bruffey,
Halla, Luttrell, Clatterbuck, Goldring, Harper, Simons, Radke,
Lindbeck, Beckley, McCoy, Justice, Daniels, Burkman, Mc-
Bride, and others.

Very Large Insects - Hoppers

The town of Millikens is located in a rich and arid valley. It is two and one-half miles from the nearest railroad station called Redhart and named to honor of a family by the man which settled there in the summer of the early 1800's. Millikens is at present a lumber mill, the lumber from the Carolina pine and pitch pine being sent to market in the neighborhood of Lumberton. The lumber is hauled to town in flat cars. John Murphy, the foreman, told that the Indians used to gather nuttahs fine stands of the pitch pine, and that they called it "Milk's Pine".

The house was built of hewed logs, and the space between the logs filled with mortar or mud, and then whitewashed. It had three porches, two tall chimneys and eight rooms. Hills Creek was named for Mr. Hill, and, because of his sterility, "will sing his requiesce longer as long as its waters flow". The creek flows through a narrow channel which increases its velocity until it plunges over a precipice more than sixty feet high, forming a perfect spray and creating the beautiful falls of Hills Creek.

Bruffey's Creek, named after the first settler, John Bruffey the pioneer, Revolutionary soldier under General Wayne, suffered in time of flood with Hills Creek, where their waters sink under each, causing no apparent pool in the lower end of the little valley. Hills Creek turns back again, and joins the smaller river. Bruffey's Creek turns upstream again, and runs in a partially sunken, for two miles, cutting into the blue loam, and on the opposite bank of Richard Hill's farm, it is lost in the hillside on a ridge.

The majority of the people of Millikens are of Scotch-Irish descent, their chief pursuits being agricultural and stock raising. Many fine herds of cattle and hogs, from time immemorial, have been kept for the winter markets, and at the present time the physician (the county agent, Dr. E. C. A. Tillery, the former) says that the country is noted for the importance of purebred stock.

As he roams about his domain he beholds a picture of unsurpassed grandeur when the sun pours his effulgent warmth and brightness over mountains, plains, valleys and hills as they unite in proclaiming "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." He also beholds historic ground, for it was at the foot of Deep Mountain where General Averill with 5000 men pitched their tents before the battle of Deep Mountain which began on November 6, 1863.

Hillsboro has always been a religious and educational center. John Jordan of Pioneer fame, gave a building site to the Methodist church, which was destroyed by fire. They have since built four other churches in the community and now worship in a very comfortable, commodious building in the town of Hillsboro. In extracts from the journal of Rev. Francis Asbury, we find that in the years 1780, 1790 and 1792 he made three evangelistic tours through this section of the country, coming up through Greenbrier County, each time and being entertained and preaching at the home of McNeal in the Little Levels, going from there to the Drinnen home where he was received so "gladly" and entertained so "kindly" in the Edray neighborhood. His course led from there to Cloverlick, down through Tygart Valley in Randolph County enroute to Morgantown. At the McNeal home lively religious discussions were indulged in by the whole community.

Oak Grove Presbyterian Church was organized in the year 1792. The early records of the Church were lost and no one remembers when it was built. A substantial brick structure in which this sect worshiped for many years was later built south east of Hillsboro, where the cemetery is still kept up. In 1830 the church was reorganized and Josiah Beard, Davis Roague, and John Jordan were elected elders. The most distinguished ministers who served this church from 1800 to 1912 were Rev. Brown, Rev. Mr. C. Campbell, Rev. John S. Martin, Rev. Mitchell W. Culley and Rev. D. S. Sydenstricker.

In the early part of the eighteenth century, when George Washington was first elected to the office of President, what was then the village of Hillsboro, under the supervision of

The first teacher, Mr. Davis had continued the large-schools rule, which was the custom of all the schools contiguous in importance to that of "Academy." It was the impression of the schools' influence on the mind and hearts of the people. In recent years the old name of Hillsboro has been restored to the town.

J. A. Dunlap, of Ponca City, Oklahoma, has contributed some recollections of ante-bellum days from his remarkable memory of conversations heard in the home of his uncle, Rev. J. A. Dailey. He thinks the first teacher ever in Hillsboro community was a man by the name of Keenan who taught more than a hundred years ago. This teacher was considered a very learned man from the fact that he could read and write and had figured in the arithmetic as far as the rule of three.

The next teacher was Rev. John S. Blain, a Presbyterian preacher, a teacher, and a physician. He is described as a large, lean, strong man, possessed of a kindly face and gentle heart. The description is somewhat contradictory as he is said to have whipped 13 boys the second day of school, 21 the third day, and five or six each day for about a week. After that no further trouble was experienced. Yet the school had an unenviable reputation that had to be disciplined and no peace within his power. The wife of Dr. Blain was a Miss MacRoberts, sister of Archibald MacRoberts, who made his home with them, told that panthers would sometimes enter their spring house and drink their milk. Mrs. MacRoberts, whose father was Randolph, of Roanoke, and a descendent of Pocahontas, was the next teacher. She was well educated and a man of great talents that he used only under compulsion. He was a Whig, and in a campaign then being conducted between a Whig and a Democrat, in which the Whig was defeated in the argument, Mr. MacRoberts became so disgusted that he followed them to the next appointment and so completely routed the Democrat that he made it suit to steer clear of his antagonist.

The next teacher was Rev. Joseph Brown, whose gentle warlike character -----? to the people; and it is to be taken for granted that as he was instrumental in the building of the Brick Academy, he must have been the first teacher within its walls. Rev. J. A. Dailey succeeded to the school from 1830 to 1832, and a Mr. L. W. McRoberts, who was a pupil and taught the grammar in the Academy for

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and the schoolroom was filled with students of various ages; the prentice and apprentices, mostly the children, were, in virtue of their inferior ability; the weavers, lightners, and woodmen, of Highland county, Virginia, and the tanneries and others of Lath county, Virginia. He taught throughout the entire year and sought the help of the more advanced pupils, notably, Rev. Wm. F. Price and Rev. James Barnes. At one time opinion that about eighty pupils were as many as one man could handle.

Mary Sprinkel taught in the home of Colonel McNeil, the first year of the Civil War, and was betrothed to John Burgess, the first man from this community to be killed by the Northern soldiers in their initial raid through the country.

From the foregoing interesting data it is easy to understand why so many noble and worthy lives were molded in this fine institution of learning. The lives of Mr. Isaac Stulting and family deserve special mention. They were natives of Holland, sent to escape religious persecution, braved the perils of the deep on the roiling craft of that day and came to dwell among us when the country was in its infancy. They were valuable additions to the social life of the community and through their devoted piety accomplished much good in this land of their adoption. Mr. Cornelius Stulting, eldest son in the family, was a fine teacher for many years and died recently, mourned by all who knew him. Mrs. Corrie Stulting Sydenstricker, a daughter in the family, gave her life as a missionary to China, being sent as a member of Oak Grove Church.

Pioneers. The first permanent settler in the wilderness of the Billabro community was John McNeil, of Frederick County, Virginia. He was of a pacifistic temperament and in the fear that he had slain his antagonist, fled from his native land and became a fugitive who followed the trend of the Alleghanies. After spending sometime in their gloomy depths he emerged into this section of the country and was so favorably impressed with the fertile land, fine timber and the general outlook of a lonely place to dwell, that he cast his tent on the gentle slope between where are now the residence road and the stream John McNeil's Sidewalk. He came here in the year 1776. After he began to occupy his tent, birds were heard circling the camp

... upon the hills for days, we could hardly believe our eyes. The sound he beheld, by the light of the camp fire, the fiery eyes of a panther, lost no time in getting rid of the unwelcome visitor.

On his while out hunting for venison and fish he met Charles and Jacob Harrison, natives of his home land, who proved angels in disguise in bringing to him the glad tidings that the men he thought he had killed had recovered and were in good health. Imagination fails to convey the great relief and gratitudo that filled his heart to know he was not a murderer, of which his future life gave convincing evidence. He invited the Harrisons to share his camp and aided them in selecting a home site adjoining his tract. About this time John McNeal came and built himself a cabin in the rear of the attorney John McNeal residence, near a wonderful spring in that locality. These three men soon returned to the lower valley of Virginia. It was on this visit that he married Martha Davis who was born in 1840. Soon after their marriage they came to the Little Licks to make their home. They brought with them a Welch Bible now in the possession of Joseph S. McNeal, son of Captain William Lamb McNeal.

Joseph McNeal is the man who offered, free of charge, marble or granite to build our new State Capitol. This stone exists in great abundance within our beautiful hills that encompass our mountains and that shelter our valley on the West. It has been a source of great disappointment to many to have such a generous offer rejected and one that if it had been accepted would have filled the heart of every citizen with a just and civic pride.

John McNeal was so deeply impressed with a sense of God's providential work that, in gratitude of all, he built a native columbarium on his hill and spent his life in labor, the last 10 years in poverty. His last will and testament was executed in Little Licks on October 10, 1870. In his will he gave to various sons, for a short time, his home situated on a grassy knoll in Little Licks Church, Little Licks, under the "Columbarium". After this arrangement he moved to Little Licks and remained "the eyes issue of their liver".

the child was never before in pottery, & had no power, when her own mother, Mrs. Wilson, dug the grave and buried the child. This was the first grave in the small cemetery, near the White Fork Church, which now affords most charming panoramic views of the surrounding country.

Now we come to the northern section of the Millside community which is Mill Point, a charming little industrial village including within its proper limits a store, a blacksmith shop, two flour mills and three homes. Many more homes are cleverly built on the hills and nestling in the coves and gins. Tourists exclaim over the majestic sweep of the hills and their graceful contour as they converge toward the village enclosing a scene of entrancing beauty.

Just above the village a beautiful and picturesque spring is found tucked away in a sheltered nook among the lonely foothills that dip their feet into the laughing waters of Stamping Creek, informing each step that spring were moused and that they must flee.

The people who live in this community are the Acetts, Barros, Clarins, Morrisons, Glendons, Truffles, Hills, Looses, Clutters, Aldridges, Harpers, Lemmings, Neves, Leneses, McCarty's, McCays, Smiths, Cockleys, Buckmans, Cloughlins and others.

(In the preparation of this article the writer is greatly indebted to Dr. Mr. & Mrs. Price's history of Roosteates County, West Virginia, border warfare, as well as to friends and neighbors).

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